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ABSTRACT

The American Parliamentary Debate Association (APDA) provides a good example of the parliamentary style of debate. The APDA and the Cross Examination Debate Association (CEDA) can be compared by considering several factors: (1) geographic participation; (2) sponsorship; (3) procedural differences; (4) resolutions; and (5) decision rendering. The APDA, found primarily at northeastern American colleges, is student-sponsored, involves extemporaneous debate modeled on the British Parliament, and tends to employ more generalized resolutions and debate than does CEDA. Unlike CEDA, in which debate judges must be college graduates, APDA judges are students. CEDA critics are more specific in their discussion of evidence, while APDA critics are more likely than their CEDA counterparts to operate under a uniform consensus: the legislative model. CEDA debate, taken out of the exclusive control of communications departments, could allow for a more interdisciplinary approach. The greater diversity of APDA-style topics could allow CEDA debaters to experience a variety of criteria and case-building strategies. Argumentation by CEDA participants seems too reliant on testimonial support, while parliamentary debaters use logic, analysis, and reasoning. If parliamentary debate techniques are adopted by CEDA, decision rendering must be adjusted accordingly. (Thirteen references are attached.) (SG)

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Impact and Implications of Parliamentary Format on American Debate

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Impact and Implications of Parliamentary Format on American Debate

Traditional intercollegiate debate has been questioned as to its ability to fulfill educational goals (Cox & Jensen, 1989). Rodden argues that the focus on the tournament system "may be unhealthy" (1985, 316). The alternative which Rodden, as well as other writers, offers is Public debating (1985; Cox & Jensen, 1989). One form of debate which seems to focus on the Public forum is parliamentary debate (Quimby, 1947; Temple & Dunn, 1948; Benn, Boyle & Harris, 1948). British debating has received sporadic consideration in speech communication literature (Rodden, 1985). Much less consideration, however, has been given to American Parliamentary Debate. The American Parliamentary Debate Association provides a good example of parliamentary debate without the cross-cultural problems plaguing discussions of British versus American debating.

Review of Literature

Communication scholars have focused primarily on British parliamentary debate. Several important distinctions have been observed:

Sponsorship - Parliamentary debate is sponsored by debating unions which are student run and have no faculty supervision. This student body leadership and participation in the debate is proposed as the cause of student enthusiasm for these activities (Temple & Dunn, 1948). However, Rodden explains that "most universities do not have debating unions separate from the

university student union . . . debates are of second importance at such universities, since the student union has a number of other commitments" (1985, 311).

Benn, Boyle and Harris (1948) propose the student sponsorship is superior because "faculty supervision and control tends to focus too much attention on the debaters and not enough on the debate" (469). Other British commentators have agreed with the "superfluous" nature of debate coaches (Freeth & Cradock, 1949). However, American commentators have argued that "good teaching should be an essential part of debating activities in England and in America" (Lull, 1949, 430).

Model - The consensus appears to place British parliamentary debating into a legislative (parliamentary) model focusing on swaying audience opinion. A British debater "becomes an orator, a politician, a leader" (Freeth & Cradock, 1949, 427). On the other hand, American debate is based on the legal tradition with emphasis on "careful preparation and at collecting of valid arguments and significant evidence" (Quimby, 1949, 159). In addition, Rodden points out differing goals between British parliamentary debate and American debate. The debating unions are seen as "miniature Parliaments" and "the oral counterparts to the student university newspapers." The American debate tradition has "more modest immediate aspirations . . . with emphasis on tournaments . . . and aimed to improve students' skills to think critically and express ideas cogently" (1985, 308). While American forensics is viewed as a laboratory for education

(Thomas, 1980), Rodden points out, "the uneven student speaking performances (during British parliamentary debates) . . . do support the overall conclusions of several previous touring American debaters that the union's original emphasis on speaker training has been lost (1985, 311)."

Audience - The different views of a public audience are noted by Freeth and Cradock.

> "The British debater, at home, is surrounded by his audience, who considers themselves a vital and equally important part of the debate, cheering, interrupting, barracking, asking questions. He learns how to put himself in touch with the audience and evoke in it an immediate response (1949, 427)."
>
> "To us, the American debater, on the other hand, seems desirous of training himself as a junior executive who wishes to give to his senior a severely factual, eminently statistical report . . . and thus the audience becomes superfluous, ignored, unwanted, and departs, alas, unmourned."

Temple and Dunn believe that the audience participation is "largely responsible for the enthusiasm and interest in (British) debate" (1948, 53). Rodden points out that "British debaters prize audience adaptation highly" (1985, 309), and that "the British system sensitizes British debaters to audiences" (305). However, others have noticed problems in attendance of the British union debates (Skorkowsky, 1971; Rodden, 1985).

Resolutions - Two important observations are noted about British resolutions. First, Skorkowsky notes that the British resolution may be interpreted as fact, value or policy (1971). Second, Rodden notes that "British speakers were serious or

light, philosophical or trivial, reasoned or banal depending on the type of debate and the nature and wording of the motion" (1985, 309). In addition, earlier discussions of British aversion to switch-side debating seem to no longer be significant as the British debaters often debate against their convictions (Skorkowsky, 1971).

Impact of the Format - Two important impacts of the format to the specific strategies of debaters are evident. First, the burden of proof lies with neither side in the British debate and depends on the prevailing audience opinion (Skorkowsky, 1971). Second, this format seems to reduce teamwork between partners (Skorkowsky, 1971; Rodden, 1985).

Comparison of American Parliamentary Debate and Cross Examination Debate Association

The purpose of this paper is to compare parliamentary debate with traditional American debate (NDT, CEDA) and draw implications and impacts for the more traditional format from the former. Comparison will be based on data from the American Parliamentary Debate Association and the Cross Examination Debate Association. Seven important factors will be considered in this comparison: Geographic participation, Sponsorship, Procedural differences, Resolutions, and Decision rendering.

Geographic participation - The American Parliamentary Debate Association (APDA) has primary concentration in the Northeast (Galvin, 1990). Review of the APDA mailing list for September

1990 reveals that most of the schools are northeastern (Connecticut, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia, and Vermont). There are a few notable exceptions (California, Illinois, Missouri, North Carolina, and Ohio). But, 1990 was the first year for Missouri schools to participate and the other states provide only eight of the sixty schools listed. The Cross Examination Debate Association (CEDA) has a broader base of geographical support with over three hundred participating schools in all fifty states.

Sponsorship - The APDA is a student sponsored organization. While traditional debate is usually housed in communication departments, parliamentary debates are not claimed by any one academic discipline. In addition, parliamentary debate is "the international style of debate" (Gutrick, 1990). This provides for participation in the English-speaking World Championships.

Procedural Differences - APDA is an off-topic extemporaneous debate with two opposing sides (Government and Opposition). Like British debate it is modeled after a house of Parliament. It is described as "a rhetorical contest which supposedly takes place in a House of Parliament" (taken from Guidelines of Parliamentary Debate). Previous literature has indicated that American debate is modeled more on a judicial model with an emphasis on evidence (Quimby, 1949; Rodden, 1985).

The speaker positions, in APDA, are Prime Minister (First Government speaker), Member of Government (Second Government

speaker), Leader of the Opposition (First Opposition speaker), and Member of the Opposition (Second Opposition speaker). The speaking times are:

Prime Minister(Constructive): 8 minutes

Leader of Opposition(Constructive): 8 minutes

Member of Government(Constructive): 8 minutes

Member of Opposition(Constructive): 8 minutes

Leader of Opposition(Rebuttal): 4 minutes

Prime Minister (Rebuttal): 4 minutes

Two important distinctions can be drawn between the APDA format and that used by CEDA. First, the rounds are significantly shorter with only six speeches and no cross-examination. The CEDA format (8-3-5), with eight speeches (four constructives and four rebuttals) and four cross-examinations, provide for much longer debates. The second significant difference lies in speaker responsibilities. While both speakers on a CEDA team give two speeches (a constructive and a rebuttal), the Prime Minister and Leader of Opposition are the only speakers in an APDA round giving rebuttals. This seems to place more responsibility on these individual speakers and may account for the criticism that there is little teamwork between parliamentary debate partners.

The final significant area of procedural differences is that of interruptions. In CEDA, interruptions during speaking time are considered inappropriate and impolite, however in APDA interruptions are structured and encouraged. Three forms of

interruptions are described in the Guide of Parliamentary Debate. The first is a point of order. Points of order are made when house rules are allegedly breached as by new arguments in rebuttals, misconstruing arguments, and speaking overtime. The second interruption is point of personal privilege which occurs when a debater feels his character has been insulted or when a previous remark is grossly misinterpreted. These two types of interruptions are answered by the judge (Speaker of the House) as either "point well taken" (agreement with the point) or "point not well taken" (disagreement with the point). In either case the debater holding the floor cannot speak in defense of themselves. If the point is "well taken" the time of the objection is deducted from the speaker's time. If the point is "not well taken" the time of the objection is not deducted from the speaker's time. The final form of interruption is heckling. "Both teams, judges, and the audience may heckle the debater at any time (Guidelines)." Heckles are defined as "short, witty, and intelligent (Ibid.)."

Resolutions - The resolutions for CEDA debate are determined at the beginning of each semester and are national. The resolutions for APDA are different for each round. The CEDA resolution is framed by coaches while the APDA resolutions are chosen by students. CEDA resolutions define a specific area of controversy to be considered. The affirmative has the right to define terms and form a specific case and the negative has the opportunity to argue the affirmatives definitions and

interpretation. APDA resolutions are more general and the only parametric argument the negative may present is the link between Government position and the resolution. Examples of the resolutions help clarify the differences. The CEDA topic for Fall 1990 is Resolved: that government censorship of public artistic expression in the United States is an undesirable infringement on individual rights. An example of an APDA resolution is drawn from the second round of the University of Chicago's tournament Spring 1990. The resolution from APDA is "They want the ocean without the awful roars of its many waves." The CEDA topic certainly calls for the affirmative to show the undesirability of some kind of government censorship of public artistic expression in terms of the infringement on individual rights. While this topic is broad, it does provide a definite limitation on the affirmative case area. The APDA case, however, need only have a link to the quotation/resolution. Subsequently, the Government could argue society's desire for freedom without the costs, a policy to provide economic relief to eastern European countries to allow democracy without excessive economic hardships for these countries, or man's attempts to control the environment. The resolutions of CEDA provide a definite background for research and preparation. The APDA resolutions preclude this type of intense and specific research (particularly since the topic is not known until ten minutes before the debate begins). Also, the APDA resolution prevents the proliferation of generic briefs which may reduce the amount of unique clash and

emphasizes logic and reasoning, as well as knowledge of current events. As noted above, the Government need only have a logical link to the resolution.

There is one other class of jurisdictional arguments the Opposition may give to the Government interpretation: debatability of the case. The debatability of the case may be argued as specific knowledge (the affirmative example is so small as to preclude general knowledge of the event in question), tautology (circular reasoning), truism (a reasonable proposition that a student could not be expected to oppose), or offensive case (cases that "do not deserve an audience (Guidelines)." These arguments focus not on parametric concerns but rather on the appropriateness of the interpretation.

Another interesting feature in the parliamentary interpretation of the resolution allows the Government "to define the place and time of the debates, or define the Speaker as a certain speaker in a certain situation, faced with a choice (Guidelines)." However, when the Speaker does so (in first constructive speech only) the participants are limited to the knowledge that existed at the specific time.

Decision rendering - The first important difference under this category is the qualifications of judges. Traditionally in CEDA judges must be at least college graduates if not coaches or graduate assistants. In APDA, with its student sponsorship, the judges are students as well. Thus, while CEDA offers at least an older evaluator, APDA offers judging by one's peers.

The criteria for decision in APDA rounds, according to Guidelines emphasizes logic, delivery, factual support, and humor. In an attempt to compare the actual decision rendering methods and differences, this paper compares data from a collection of CEDA ballots (from the Central Missouri State University tournament)(Cox & Lyman, 1989) with those of a collection of APDA ballots (from the University of Chicago tournament). The CEDA ballot analysis rendered fifteen subgroups of criticisms (delivery, cross examination, organization, strength or weakness of arguments, criteria/value, specific case points, offcase/value objections, refutation, evidence, topicality, personal views, judging philosophy, adaptation, specific speaker delineation, general/miscellaneous). The analysis of APDA yielded twenty-five subgroups of criticism (style, delivery, volume, wording, speed, charisma, specific case points, clarity, definition/interpretation, refutation, substance, structure, evidence, heckles, offending judge/audience, humor, APDA format, interpretation, signposting, traditional debate theory, flowing arguments, rebuttal argumentation, personal views and general/miscellaneous). To facilitate discussion of the specific differences, the above factors have been classified under four main headings: presentation, arguments, audience/judge considerations, procedural.

Presentation

Both groups of ballots discuss presentational critiques.

APDA ballots placed about the same emphasis on this factor as CEDA ballots. The APDA ballots discussed style, volume, wording, clarity, speed, and charisma much like the CEDA ballots. In addition, the APDA ballots provided less space for the Reasons for Decision section of the ballot much like the old AFA ballots. The APDA ballot provides over two-thirds of its space for specific speaker comments, where as the currentjy popular CEDA ballot provides a similar rank and numbering device with a large space for general comments and Reasons for Decision (RFD) at the bottom. Interestingly, although APDA rounds are already "slow" by current CEDA standards, the use of rapid delivery (speed) was regularly penalized.

Argumentation

While both CEDA and APDA offer cases and offcase (countercase for APDA), specifically identified points were mentioned more often in CEDA. APDA emphasized the general arguments as opposed to specific subpoints of arguments (some ballots called this substance). Similarly, refutational critiques of CEDA centered more on specific subpoints while APDA emphasized general arguments. Both sets of critics discussed organization and structure of constructives.

The most striking difference of argumentation analysis were the discussions of evidence. While the CEDA critics often discussed specific pieces of evidence, the APDA critics discussed the use of common knowledge, and in fact one APDA ballot criticized the use of specific quotations. The CEDA critics

focused comments upon support of a testimonial nature, whereas the APDA critics emphasized different types of support. Discussions of rebuttals seemed similar in both groups.

Audience/Judge Considerations

This is the area of greatest difference. The CEDA critics were more likely to discuss personal judging philosophies whereas all APDA critics operate under a uniform consensus - - the model of a legislative session. APDA critics centered their comments on how well the speakers addressed themselves to the critics as their audience. APDA ballots contained comments on offending the judge, use of humor, and the creativity or lack thereof in heckles. The APDA critics appeared to view themselves as audience members. But experienced CEDA critics view themselves as judge or evaluator of arguments. Both ballots contained references to personal views held by the critic.

Procedural

Two significant distinctions arise in this consideration. First, jurisdictional issues (CEDA: topicality, prima facie etc; APDA: link, debatability) were more prevalent in CEDA ballots than in APDA ballots. The most prevalent discussion in CEDA ballots was topicality, while the APDA ballots had only two discussions of a truism argument.

The second major consideration is discussion of the other types of debating (i.e. APDA ballot criticizing CEDA style arguments). These criticism were exclusively on the APDA ballots. The ballots chastised speakers for excessive

signposting, using CEDA debate theory, speed, and even carrying a "flow pad" or legal pad to the podium. The APDA critics seemed aware of the differences between APDA and CEDA and dissuaded the speaker from utilizing the style of the latter.

A final comment would note that APDA does not utilize a cross-examination period.

Implications and Impacts of Parliamentary Debate on CEDA

In this section we will propose several structural and attitudinal changes which CEDA should adopt from parliamentary debate. The discussion will be divided into six sections: sponsorship, resolutions, argumentation, presentation, decision rendering, and audience/public format.

Sponsorship - The use of forensics as a laboratory exclusively for communication departments has perhaps become disadvantageous. Taking debate from the exclusive control of the communication department might allow for a more interdisciplinary approach. For instance, to what extent do debaters actively interact with professors in all the various disciplines? Current practices often promote isolation and territoriality rather than a healthy cross-discipline approach.

The use of student sponsorship might bring about more support from the non-debating student body. In addition, student sponsorship (with faculty supervision) might prove to be a valuable teaching tool. Students, responsible for running tournaments, requesting funds, and public relations might learn many useful skills.

Resolutions - APDA topics may seem at times trivial, however the diverse nature of these topics provide several benefits. First, topics are neither policy, value or fact. This allows the debaters to experience a variety of criteria and case-building strategies. Also, it excludes debates over the category into which the resolution belongs, and promotes debating the affirmative interpretation, thus increasing clash. Second, the topics are not always serious in nature. Perhaps, CEDA should consider some topics of a less grave and serious nature as well. Third, the resolutions from APDA tend to support less evidentiary debate and rely more on logic and interpretation. While the resolution is not the whole cause of this more logic oriented approach, it can be seen as a contributing factor.

Argumentation - Argumentation in CEDA seems too reliant on testimonial support. We propose that the use of a variety of support in parliamentary debate is a superior argumentative tool. Simply reading a "card" with a "tag line" is often considered sufficient justification for the most counter-intuitive of arguments in CEDA. This could cause a deficiency in the use of logic, analysis, and reasoning. The parliamentary debater is forced to use these skills in debating a resolution. We propose that these are pedagogically valuable tools which CEDA is neglecting.

In addition, parliamentary debate seems weighted more on the overall reasoning and argumentation than CEDA. With excess structuring and game playing, CEDA rounds have lost sight of the

overall argumentation. We do not propose that structure is detrimental, however the weight on minor sub-points, as opposed to overall arguments, has made CEDA a game. We, further, do not propose intervention by judges in CEDA rounds, however in the name of not intervening, every minute sub-point is given absolutely equal weight with every argument in the round. This is not avoiding intervention it is non-evaluative. The judge becomes a blackboard on which the debaters write, thus extracting the essential evaluative process the critics should play.

Presentation - The emphasis on presentation is one which cannot be ignored. Traditional American debate has put a premium on arguments, while parliamentary debate has emphasized presentation. We do not propose abolition of argumentation, or even de-emphasizing this important aspect. We claim, however, that the value of presentation has been neglected. These skills should have equal status with weight of arguments in the decision rendering process.

Decision rendering - The changes listed above can only be facilitated with a shift in decision rendering philosophy. Increased emphasis on presentation and well analyzed and logically defended arguments can only be achieved if critics consider these factors more heavily.

Other changes we draw from parliamentary debate, are the inclusion of student judges. This factor would enhance not only the performance of those debating, who would be forced to adapt to the critics, but also the performance of the students given

the opportunity to judge these events. Many debaters turned critics would support the idea that an entirely new perspective is gained on the "other side of the table."

Audience - We support the conclusions of other writers (Cox & Jensen, 1989; Rodden, 1985) that the public format would greatly facilitate the pedagogical goals of the debate activity. The parliamentary model of the legislative branch could be incorporated into the existing CEDA format. At Central Missouri State University we have used public formats to both improve our students and gain attention and support from the student population. Debate should no longer be an elitist event. If we are to retain our pedagogical goals and increase public awareness of our activity we must be willing take our skills to the public.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted a comparison between American Parliamentary Debate and CEDA. This comparison has shown significant differences in goals and procedures. Finally, we have attempted to draw implications from parliamentary debates for changes in CEDA. While this paper is by no means a comprehensive consideration of this comparison, it is an attempt to show that CEDA can learn and grow from considering some of the aspects of parliamentary debate.

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